



Cornell University  
College of Veterinary Medicine



# DOG Watch

Expert information on medicine, behavior and health from a world leader in veterinary medicine

Vol. 17, No. 4 ♦ April 2013

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Behavior modification and medication could help, but he'd always pose a risk.

## IN THE NEWS ...

### 3,000 Goldens sought for lifetime research

A pioneering study of the risk factors for cancer and other diseases in Golden Retrievers will involve 3,000 dogs over 10 to 15 years. The Morris Animal Foundation and oncologist Rodney Page, DVM, at Colorado State University are recruiting purebred Goldens for the Canine Lifetime Health Project.

Researchers hope the results of the observational study will also have human application. Cancer is estimated to be the No. 1 cause of death in dogs over the age of 2, according to CSU, but no valid database exists to determine its frequency or influencing factors.

To join the study, Goldens must be healthy, under 2 years old, with a proven three-generation pedigree. Owners will meet regularly with their dogs' veterinarian and complete online questionnaires about lifestyle, diet, reproductive history, environment, exercise, medications and other health concerns throughout the dog's life.

To apply, visit [www.CanineLifetimeHealth.org](http://www.CanineLifetimeHealth.org). ♦

## Searching for Clues in Their DNA

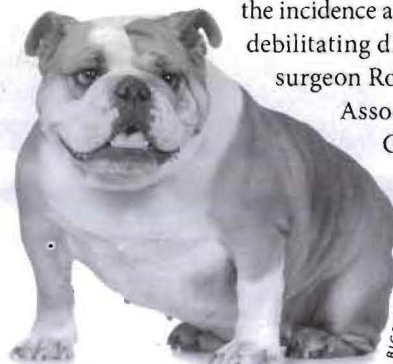
*Researchers are looking for variations predisposing dogs to hip dysplasia, leading to their identification and earlier treatment*

Cornell researchers have undertaken an ambitious project comparing the DNA of more than 4,000 purebred and semi-domesticated dogs. They're searching for genetic markers — variations in the DNA — in a subset of 1,000 of the dogs that cause canine hip dysplasia, a common, hereditary disorder affecting up to 75 percent of dogs.

Their discoveries could open the door to developing DNA identification tests, better and

earlier medical management, and eventually gene-based or protein-based treatments.

"Overall, our goal is to prevent or reduce the incidence and severity of this progressively debilitating disease," says board-certified surgeon Rory J. Todhunter, BVSc, Ph.D., Associate Chair for Research and Graduate Education in the Clinical Sciences Department at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.



English Bulldogs have the highest incidence.

**Finding Markers.** He's zeroing in on a subset of the 38 canine autosomes

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## Six Ways to Stop Destructive Chewing

*The most important is determining the underlying reason, whether it's boredom, lack of exercise or a medical problem*

Little did Pamela Perry, DVM, Ph.D., realize when she got her beloved chocolate Labrador Retriever that Bailey would prove to be a high-energy destructive chewer for the dog's 15½-year life. Bailey ripped cushions and dog beds. She shredded pillows and ingested objects from socks to duct tape, with a special fondness for the cats' toys. "She was an extreme chewer," says Dr. Perry, a lecturer in animal behavior at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.

But Dr. Perry developed strategies that fostered a rewarding life together. Her sanity-saving advice can help anyone who lives with a relentless chewer:

1) *Understand that chewing is an exploratory behavior for dogs.* While humans use

hands to pick up objects and feel them, dogs use their mouths. "You don't want to use physical punishment," says Dr. Perry. Instead when you see your dog chew a shoe or sofa leg, interrupt with a sharp noise such as a handclap and redirect his attention to a chew toy or favorite ball. Praise amply as he plays with it: "Good dog, yes!" Give treats. "Dogs learn more quickly when you reward good behavior," Dr. Perry says.

2) *Don't play chase.* You may be tempted to grab a shoe from dog's mouth without offering a substitute chew toy, but dogs are reluctant to relinquish a prize and may even race off with the stolen shoe. "A lot of dogs really enjoy that part of the game," Dr. Perry

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*DogWatch* (ISSN: 1098-2639) is published monthly for \$39 per year by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 800 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. Robert Englander,

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## Free sight exams for service dogs

Sandra Ball of Beltsville, Md., has a mobility service dog who helps her navigate stairs, opens doors, takes off her shoes and brings her the phone. She's taken 8-year-old Quincy, a Golden Retriever, to the free ACVO/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam Event since 2009.

At one appointment, Quincy was diagnosed with Golden Retriever uveitis, an inflammatory condition that can result in blindness. Signs of the disease may not be evident to owners, so it often progresses to an advanced stage. "If it were not for this program, I wouldn't have taken Quincy to an eye exam," says Ball. "This exam meant possibly saving Quincy's sight."

The American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists and the animal health company Merial are sponsoring the sixth annual exam for the month of May to honor guide dogs, assistance animals for the disabled, detection dogs, therapy animals, and search and rescue dogs. More than 250 board-certified veterinary ophthalmologists across the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico will donate their services.

Registration for owners and handlers is open from April 1-30 at [www.ACVOeyeexam.org](http://www.ACVOeyeexam.org). Animals must be certified by a formal training program or organization, or be enrolled in a formal training program. Once registered online, owners can access a list of participating ophthalmologists in their area to schedule an appointment in May.

Since the program was launched in 2008, veterinary ophthalmologists have examined nearly 16,000 service animals. They look for problems including redness, squinting, cloudy corneas, retinal disease and early cataracts.

Service dogs from a variety of groups have had the eye screenings, including the Transportation Security Agency; military working dogs from Lackland Air Force Base in Texas; Puppies Behind Bars, an organization providing psychiatric service dogs to soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan; and fire, rescue and police agencies.



SANDRA BALL

The free ACVO/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam just possibly saved Quincy's eyesight. The Golden Retriever helps her owner with mobility and fetches objects for her.

## Farewell to 'Fido'

Of the more than 485,000 policies at Veterinary Pet Insurance, only 11 of them are registered in the name of Fido. Owners today, following the trend regarding pets as part of the family, seem to prefer people names for dogs, at least the insured ones. The top five dog names in 2012 were also among Baby.com's 100 popular names that year. The most popular dog names, according to VIP:

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. Bella  | 6. Buddy   |
| 2. Bailey | 7. Daisy   |
| 3. Max    | 8. Maggie  |
| 4. Lucy   | 9. Charlie |
| 5. Molly  | 10. Sophie |

Coincidentally, Bella was also the No. 1 name for cats. And the most popular name for birds and exotic animals: Charlie.

## Keeping them safe

Pet owners who sign up for email alerts from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals will receive free Pet Safety Packs. They include an ASPCA Animal Poison Control magnet and a window decal alerting rescue personnel that pets are inside the home. For more information, use the keywords "pet safety pack" at [www.aspc.org](http://www.aspc.org). ♦





BIGSTOCK

Looking to the future, owners can designate a trustee to manage and distribute funds and a caregiver to supervise food, exercise and medical treatment for their dog.

considers pets to be property, akin to inanimate objects. Because inanimate objects can't receive an inheritance, a trustee and caregiver must be assigned. In addition, in standard trusts the beneficiary is the only one with standing to enforce a trust — to complain to the court, for example, that the conditions aren't met. Obviously, dogs can't do that. In order for an arrangement benefiting a pet to be enforceable, a type of trust called an "honorary trust" must be established. Participants include:

- ◆ *The settlor or grantor, the person who creates the trust:* That's you.
- ◆ *The trustee:* the person who will manage and distribute the funds of the trust.
- ◆ *The caregiver:* who may or may not be the same person as the trustee. It's always wise to designate more than one caregiver in case circumstances change.
- ◆ *The beneficiary:* your dog.

You can add a provision in your will that states your intentions for your dog, but that language is not legally enforceable. You have no guarantee your dog will receive the care you envisioned.

In recent years, more states have enacted pet trust laws that function as honorary trusts. According to the ASPCA, 46 states and the District of Columbia now have these statutes. Only Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota and Mississippi do not. Prof. Alexander points out that an honorary trust can exist even without legislation under the state's common law. "Technically, it's what lawyers call a power of appointment, meaning that the person to whom the money for the pet's care is given is legally free to use the property for that purpose but cannot be compelled to do so."

State statutes can have individual differences. For example, the New York

*(continued on bottom of page 4)*

## What Happens if You Go First?

*A pet trust provides continuing care according to your wishes — and it's legally enforceable*

Outliving your dog is painful, but it's the natural order, given the short canine lifespan. More difficult — and more crucial — to contemplate: What happens if you go first? Even if you have relatives or friends who are fond of your dog, preparing for that contingency shouldn't be done casually. You need to be specific about your wishes, make sure they're enforceable by law — and back up your plans with money designated for your dog's care. The good news: A vast majority of states now have laws recognizing pet trusts.

Quite simply, a pet trust is a legal arrangement that lets you use assets, such as insurance policies, real estate, cash

or retirement fund, for the care of your dog in the event of your disability or death. You can leave assets only to a living person, says Gregory S. Alexander, J.D., a Robert Noll Professor of Law at Cornell University and an internationally renowned expert in property law and theory. As a result, "You have to find someone to receive the legal title to the property [the assets] that you're going to use to benefit the pet, and you have to find somebody willing to use that property to look after the pet."

**Several Hurdles.** Prof. Alexander points out that pet trusts are not without difficulties. For one thing, the law



## Four Easy Steps to Giving Liquid Medicine

*Praise and a tasty treat will help your dog associate the syringe with a reward*

If your dog needs liquid medicine, make sure you know the right amount to avoid an accidental overdose. Ask the veterinarian to indicate the dosage on the syringe using a permanent marker or tape.

At home, your goal is to get your dog to associate the syringe with a reward. You do this by using tasty treats, generous praise and following these four simple steps for success:

1) *Fill the syringe with the medication, and put a small amount of cheese, peanut butter or another treat on the outside of it.* The treat of choice won't mask the taste, but it will help encourage a cooperative state of mind in your dog.

2) *Keep him from wriggling free by positioning his body against you.* This



With a treat on the syringe and the medication inside, insert it into the side of the mouth.

also prevents him from backing up. Restrain his head with one hand in a U-hold. With the treat on the syringe and the medication inside, insert the syringe into the side of his mouth.

3) *As your dog focuses on licking the treat, inject the medication slowly into the back of his throat.* Remove the syringe and close his mouth so he can't spit out the medication.

4) *As soon as he swallows the medication, follow up immediately with a small healthy treat to reinforce medicine-giving time as a positive experience.* Be sure to praise him for a job well done.

Finally, be sure to clean the interior and exterior of the syringe before storing it. ❖

DR. SOPHIA YIN

### CONTINUING CARE

#### PET TRUSTS... (continued from page 3)

statute gives the court discretion to reduce the amount of money given to a pet if it deems the amount excessive. Accordingly, the \$12 million that Leona Helmsley left for the care of her dog, Trouble, was reduced to a mere \$2 million.

You can fill out forms for a pet trust on the Internet — the specifics of your state's pet trust statutes are not difficult to find on the Internet — or consult an attorney.

**Steps to Take.** A legal structure for your dog's care is only one step in making sure your wishes will be carried out. Others include:

- ◆ Having a serious discussion with your potential caregiver(s) to make sure he understands what's involved in caring for your dogs — especially if you have more than one — and is willing to take on the responsibility. (It's always best to keep pets who have bonded in a household together.)
- ◆ Being as specific about the details of care, including food, medical needs, exercise requirements, name and contact information of his veterinarian. You can't specify capricious requirements, Prof. Alexander says. That is, those not reasonably necessary for your dog's well being, such as walking him in circles six times a day 20 minutes at a time in the same spot in Central Park. "The court is going to have a

great deal of discretion to determine what is capricious."

- ◆ Making sure to set aside enough money for care and your dog's funeral arrangements — cremation or burial. The amount will depend on his age, health and any extreme measures you want administered in case of illness. A good rule of thumb is to multiply his average annual expenses by a reasonable life expectancy, adding extra money for the caretaker's time. The trustee is in charge of giving the money to the caretaker according to a prearranged schedule, generally annually.

If the trustee and caregiver are different people, give the trustee a photo of your dog, microchip information and a DNA sample to protect against fraud. This may not be necessary if a great deal of money isn't involved and if your trustee knows your caretaker — and your dog — well, but there have been cases of a caregiver getting a replacement dog to continue receiving money when your dog dies early.

Be sure to give copies of the trust to the trustee and designated caregivers, and stay in touch with the caregivers to update your trust in case circumstances change.

The most important thing is to get the paperwork done, so you can have peace of mind about your dog's future if you're not around to guide it. The law may not consider your dog a family member, but you know better. ❖



**CHEWING...** *(continued from the cover)*

says. Better idea: Give the dog a substitute toy.

**3) Determine the reason for chewing.**

Examples: lack of stimulation, hunger because of a new diet, separation anxiety, noise phobia (such as a fear of fireworks or thunderstorms), territorial behavior, or a medical problem. You don't want to suppress an activity that's anxiety based without treating the underlying anxiety; talk to your dog's veterinarian, who can prescribe anti-anxiety medication such as selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors like fluoxetine. Bailey's chewing was due to her high energy and juvenile-like behavior. "Labradors are working dogs, and if they don't have a job to do, they need to have an appropriate outlet for their energy," Dr. Perry says.

**4) You can dog-proof your house, putting away enticing items but likely can't protect everything.** When Bailey couldn't be supervised, she stayed in a dog-proof room with items that were safe and had little consequence if they were destroyed. Provide opportunities for chewing by keeping the dog room stocked with appropriate chew items and treat- and food-dispensing toys such as Kongs. Bailey received a substantial portion of her meals from those kinds of toys, Dr. Perry says. "She had to push them around to access the food inside." Be sure to rotate toys to keep them interesting to your dog.

**5) Exercise works wonders.** Dr. Perry played many daily Frisbee sessions with Bailey. As the dog grew older, even just 10 minutes of exercise was beneficial — it gave her the stimulation she needed. "The more active the dog," Dr. Perry says, "the more enrichment he needs."

**6) Finding the reason for excessive chewing is paramount.** It's not for spite, as some owners believe. "Animals are expressing themselves when they chew, and do it for lots of possible reasons — they may be anxious or coping with stress, for examples," Dr. Perry says. "Animals are not doing this to get back at us. We need to identify the underlying issue and deal with it appropriately." ♦



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**Dogs use their mouths to explore their world,** but a handclap or favorite toy can redirect their attention when they're bent on destruction.

## THE TOP REASONS DOGS ARE RELINQUISHED

House soiling, destructive chewing, excessive activity, aggression, fearfulness and barking are the top behavioral reasons dogs are relinquished to shelters, says Pamela Perry, DVM, Ph.D., a lecturer in animal behavior at Cornell.

Moreover, research has found that the odds of relinquishing a dog were increased for households that didn't participate in obedience classes after adoption and for dogs who spent most of their time in crates, basements, garages or confined in a yard.

The recurring theme in several surveys is that young, mixed-breed dogs with perceived behavior problems are at the greatest risk of being surrendered to a shelter, Dr. Perry says. "Educating dog owners regarding recognition and management of normal dog behavior, obedience training and addressing common behavior problems could help enhance owner attachment to their dogs and reduce the number of dogs entering shelters."



**HIP...** *(continued from the cover)*

(non-sex chromosomes) “to find markers for the traits underlying hip dysplasia in dogs and, in the long term, the mutations that predispose to these traits.”

Hip dysplasia, an abnormality of the hip joint, is often discovered on X-rays when a dog is a few months old or later in life. “If a dog is radiographically (X-ray) affected, you can tell right away,” Dr. Todhunter says. But predicting the genetic susceptibility to CHD or the genetic value of a dog especially before X-rays can be reliably evaluated hasn’t been possible.

Dr. Todhunter and his team, including Adam Boyko and Marta Castelhano, are investigating chromosome regions for genes that might increase the risk, or protect against, CHD. They’ll look next for specific gene mutations. The ongoing study of dogs, with and without hip dysplasia, uses a new genetic tool called SNPs — single nucleotide polymorphisms — which are snippets of DNA.

The sequencing of the canine genome — the entirety of a dog’s hereditary information except for a minute amount carried in mitochondria, the cells’ “energy factories” and transmit-

ted only through the mother — allows researchers to chart the DNA structure of individual dogs by comparing the arrangement of four basic molecules that make up the pairs of chromosomes.

They can compare points on the chromosomes to find individual changes in the genetic code. This particular SNP commercial array provides about 160,000 individual markers for comparison, Dr. Todhunter says. Even with standard and custom software to make comparisons of genotypes between affected and unaffected dogs, the researchers’ work is painstaking.

“Each animal has a unique combination like a fingerprint, so it becomes a basic problem of detection, of finding a marker” connected to CHD, Dr. Todhunter says.

The researchers have found suspect regions on several chromosomes in Labrador Retrievers, Greyhounds and their cross-breed offspring, and a few other breeds. Labs and Greyhounds have high and low susceptibility to CHD respec-



DR. RORY J. TODHUNTER

**Dr. Rory Todhunter and his team** are investigating chromosome regions for genes that might increase the risk, or protect against, canine hip dysplasia.

tively. Crossing such breeds breaks up the DNA and maximizes mapping power.

**A “Hip Chip” for Labs.** Whether these same regions on the same chromosomes similarly affect all pure breeds and exactly how they work in mixed breeds is not clear yet, Dr. Todhunter says. “We’re in the final stage of developing a ‘hip chip’ for Labs consisting of a subset of these markers that can predict the genetic qualities that predispose Labs to hip dysplasia. This will lead to a DNA test within the next year, I hope.” One possible result: Identification of genetically susceptible dogs at any age, especially before breeding.

“We don’t know how many genes are contributing to hip dysplasia,” Dr. Todhunter adds. “Some may have an infinitesimal effect and some a measureable effect. We might be able to find the five to 20 primary genes that in some combination cause CHD. These are the important genes, although there are probably hundreds involved tangentially — what we refer to as the genetic background.”

Hip dysplasia is recognized as “polygenic” due to its breeding outcomes. When two unaffected animals mate, one-third of their offspring are affected,

## SMALLER DOGS ARE ALSO AT RISK

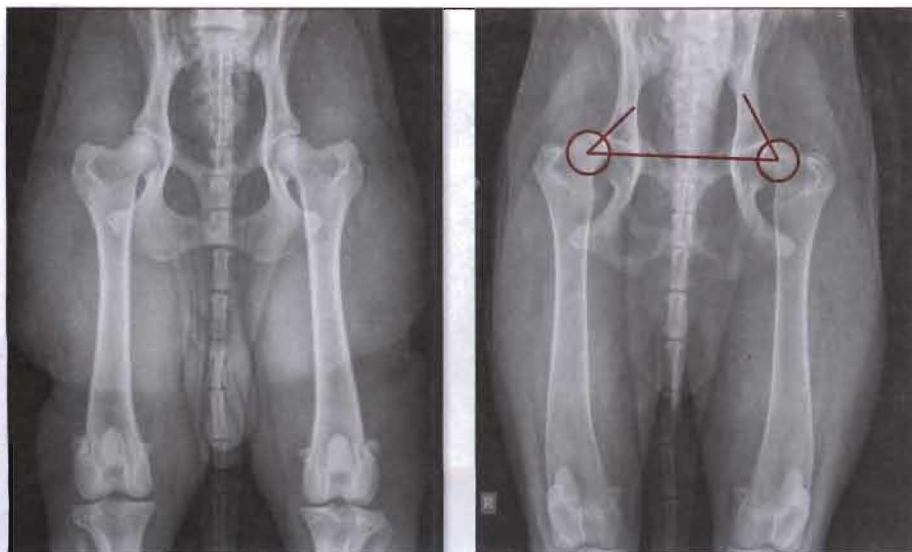
It’s generally believed that only large dogs develop hip dysplasia, but smaller dogs also are at risk. In fact, the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals ranks English Bulldogs as having the highest incidence of CHD among 164 breeds.

An OFA chart of hip statistics, comprising breeds that had at least 100 diagnostic evaluations between 1974 and 2011, lists Bulldogs now at the top with 72 percent showing dysplastic hips. Pugs are second at 66 percent. Importantly, CHD incidence is lower in some larger breeds, presumably due to successful breeding programs — such as the 19 percent rate listed for German Shepherd Dogs and Golden Retrievers, which is down 15 and 30 percent, respectively, for dogs born between 1990 and 2005.

“Historically, it’s been misrepresented as a disease of large-breed dogs,” says Greg Keller, DVM, OFA chief of veterinary services. “Nobody knows what the true incidence is. Our statistics are based only on the (hip X-ray) evaluations submitted to us.”

OFA has collected and evaluated X-rays of hip and elbow joints since the 1960s. Over that period, hip dysplasia has decreased in several breeds, including Labrador and Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Newfoundlands, Bernese Mountain Dogs and Rottweilers.





DR. RORY J. TODHUNTER

**Veterinarians use several X-ray techniques** to assess canine hips. The dog on the left, shown in the traditional extended hip position, has good hip conformation. The dog on the right has bilateral hip dysplasia and arthritis, with the image showing a measurement of laxity called the Norberg angle.

and when two affected dogs breed, about one-third of their puppies are normal.

Breeders have used this basic genetic knowledge to breed for healthier hips by combining diagnostic X-rays that identify normal dogs with medical data about their relatives — their family pedigree. Subsequently, the incidence of CHD has dropped in several breeds. Genetic testing would make it much easier to breed healthier dogs and avoid breeding affected ones.

In 1998 Dr. Todhunter introduced a new CHD diagnostic test at Cornell developed with researchers George Lust, Ph.D.,

and James Farese, DVM, DACVS. The imaging and evaluation method, called the dorsolateral subluxation, or DLS test, was designed to reduce the number of false results found on other diagnostic tests.

“An advantage is DLS can be done on young dogs 6 to 8 months old, ideally before breeding,” he says. “It detects hip laxity by putting the dog in a kneeling position but without any additional load on the hip. It is about 80 percent accurate in predicting who will develop osteoarthritis and who will not.”

Eventually, combining DLS imaging with DNA genetic testing will be the

best diagnostic procedures to predict dogs most at risk, he says. Breeders will be able to refine their breeding programs and veterinarians can offer earlier detection and treatment.

However, breed susceptibility is only one contributing element. A dog's weight, age and activity level also influence the disorder's onset and severity. In addition, other environmental factors may be involved.

**Nutrition's Role.** “One known environmental factor is nutrition. Growth, especially rapid growth, affects how hip dysplasia develops,” says Dr. Todhunter. In one study, puppies fed 25 percent less food than those in a second comparable group who were allowed ad lib feeding at the end of two years showed a significantly lower occurrence and severity of both CHD and secondary arthritis.

The prospect of future gene- or protein-based therapy will depend on knowing the genes involved — a single one or a cocktail of genes of their protein products. For now, the therapy remains a big question.

To eliminate CHD, researchers will need to find the genes that also are identified with the bone structure and body conditions influencing CHD, “genes affecting what makes the hip joint, cartilage, tissues and ligaments,” Dr. Todhunter says. His conclusion: “I've been doing research on it 19 years now and I'll probably be doing it until I die.”

Until marker- or gene-based tests are available, dogs to be bred should be X-rayed beforehand. Information about the hip quality of relatives should be available, and people buying dogs should ask for it. Cornell has provided a measure of genetic quality for hip conformation for about 150,000 Labradors based on data on the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals' website. Information on the genetic quality of more than 1 million dogs, covering 95 percent of available purebred dogs, will soon be published. Breeders can use the information to produce the best quality offspring. ♦

## A PRIMER ON HIP DYSPLASIA

Hip dysplasia develops when the hip bone doesn't fit properly into the hip joint, causing instability, inflammation and joint damage.

### The signs:

- ◆ Decreased activity, especially in dogs 4 to 12 months old
- ◆ Joint pain
- ◆ Lameness, difficulty running, bunny-hopping
- ◆ Worn cartilage, osteoarthritis
- ◆ Muscle weakness
- ◆ Bone spurs

### Diagnosis

- ◆ Physical examination, family history
- ◆ Four measures based on X-ray techniques are used to image and measure canine hips: the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals hip score, PennHip distraction index, dorsolateral

subluxation (DLS) score and the Norberg angle.

### Treatment

- ◆ Weight control
- ◆ Supervised exercise
- ◆ Anti-inflammatory medications and nutraceuticals
- ◆ Various surgical procedures, including hip replacement





**Katherine A. Houpt, VMD, Ph.D.**, diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists and emeritus James Law Professor of Animal Behavior at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, provided the answer on this page.

**Please Share Your Questions**  
We welcome questions of general interest on health, medicine and behavior. We regret however, that we cannot comment on specific products and prior diagnoses. Please send correspondence to:

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## COMING UP ...

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WORST SUMMER  
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BEST FOOD  
FOR PUPPIES

## What are the options for a fear-aggressive dog?

**Q** I am fostering an 18-month-old neutered male German Shepherd-Husky named Jack. He was left behind when his owner left him on a chain outside in the elements. He has issues. Plays well with my dogs, doesn't bother the cat but is fiercely protective of me, to the point of snarling at my 16-year-old son, who was handing me ice cream.

Jack won't let people approach the car when he's inside. He's a very watchdog-on-the-job personality. He is also aggressive on his chain. At same time, he wants to be snuggled, petted, brushed and cries when I leave his sight. I don't want to have to euthanize Jack. I wanted to check into other options. Is there any place that takes dogs like him?

**A** Jack is not a very good prospect for adoption because he exhibits aggression in several circumstances. Many dogs are aggressive in a car. I call it the "turtle-syndrome" because the dog is protected by the shell of the car and may feel invincible, particularly because the car smells like you and like him, so he is more confident. Many Shepherds — and other dogs, too — have a fear component to their aggression, so he may be more aggressive, not because he is protecting you, but because he has you to protect him.

Chaining a dog can lead to aggression probably because the dog is frustrated in his ability to escape and has a very small territory to defend. The Centers for Disease Control found that chaining was a risk factor for fatal dog attacks. A fenced yard would be a much better place for Jack.

If someone wanted to adopt him, his behavior could be improved with behavior modification and psychoactive medication, but he would always pose a risk.

At the moment I would not take him in the car unless he is in an airline crate, so he can neither see out nor bite. You could try a Calming Cap (available at [www.thundershirt.com](http://www.thundershirt.com)), which



HELEN PEPPE PHOTOGRAPHY

**Behavior modification** and psychoactive medication could improve Jack's behavior, but he would always pose a risk

helps some dogs be less reactive to people outside the car. You could teach him to sit and stay while your son tosses (not hands) treats to him. Gradually, he should learn that a person approaching is not a threat but is associated with good things.

It is too bad that there are so many dogs like Jack who, through no fault of their own, are not good pets. I am glad there are so many caring people like you who want to help dogs. Unfortunately, there are very few Homes for Wayward Dogs. In the first place, it is expensive, as you well know, to feed a dog and provide veterinary care. In the second place, an aggressive dog is a liability. He might bite or even kill a person.

If Jack went to a home of a responsible, dog-savvy person, his behavior could be modified, and he would probably be fine with that person, but people don't live in a vacuum. Mail carriers come to the door and relatives visit. Children and infirm elderly are at special risk. If many dogs are to be cared for, help will be needed to clean kennels and, one would hope, to walk and play with the dogs.

Some well meaning people take on more animals than they can afford. and the result is neglect or even starvation of the dogs. The only welcoming place that I know of is Best Friends Animal Society. They took in some of the Michael Vick fighting dogs who could not be re-homed. ♦

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